AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) Method for driving ~~the~~ support rolls (7c) of a continuous casting machine for liquid metals, ~~especially liquid steel materials,~~ which support rolls form a strand guide (7) for a ~~the~~ continuously cast strand (1), which strand guide comprises ~~consists of~~ electrically driven individual support rolls (7c) and/or hydraulically adjustable support roll segments (9), comprising the steps of: using ~~wherein~~ an automatic load balance control system (12) for all ~~the~~ drives (10) ~~is used~~ as a ~~the~~ sum of ~~the~~ individual forces for casting speed, motor torque, motor speed, and standard correction factors; providing the control system ~~and is provided~~ with individual adjustment of torque and speed of each drive support roll motor; determining~~,~~ ~~wherein~~ a total driving torque for all drives (10) ~~is determined~~ from a ~~the~~ normal force of the driven drive support rolls (7c); and proportionately transmitting the total driving torque ~~transmitted~~ to each support roll (7c) in such a way that a static

base setting of ~~the~~ torque distribution is used as a ~~the~~ basis for the specific load capacity of each drive support roll (7c).

2. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the specific load capacity of a drive support roll (7c) is determined from ~~the~~ geometry of the strand guide (7), ~~the~~ ferrostatic head, and/or ~~the~~ roll separation (7b).

3. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ current contact forces (F_1 - F_n) of ~~the~~ piston-cylinder units (11) of a strand support roll segment (9) or of a drive support roll (7c) and ~~oprational~~ operational values of a ~~the~~ casting format are fed back to the automatic load balance control system (12).

4. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 3, wherein a dynamic factor derived from the contact forces (F_1 - F_n) of ~~the~~ individual torques (M_{1-n}) and from ~~the~~ individual speeds (n_{1-n}) for a ~~the~~ preassigned torque value for each drive (10) is obtained from a ~~the~~ ratio of a ~~the~~ current normal force of the drive support roll (7c) to a ~~the~~ theoretical normal force.

5. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 1, wherein an additional correction factor for ~~the~~ roll wear and ~~the~~ friction conditions between the cast strand (1) and the support rolls (7a) or drive support roll (7c) is taken into account.

6. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 1, wherein an unweighted overall factor formed from the specific load capacity, a ~~the~~ dynamic factor, and an ~~the~~ additional correction factor is taken into consideration.

7. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 6, wherein a weighted overall factor is formed from the unweighted overall factor by multiplication with a ~~the~~ ratio of the number of all active drives (10) to a ~~the~~ sum of all unweighted factors of all active drives (10) and taken into consideration.

8. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 7 [[1]], wherein a closed-loop control system is provided for each drive (10) and is supplied with ~~the~~ mean value of ~~the~~ driving torques of all active drives (10) and of a ~~the~~ set-point speed (n_{set}).

9. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 8 [[7]], wherein the mean value, together with the weighted overall factor in each case, is supplied to ~~the~~ automatic controllers as a set point (M_{set}), and each automatic controller converts it to a speed set point (n_{set}).

10. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 8, wherein for determining ~~the determination of~~ the mean value or a ~~the~~ summation of the driving torques, only those drives (10) are considered which are suitable for ~~the~~ transmission of the driving torque.

11. (Currently amended) Method in accordance with claim 8, wherein ~~the~~ current contact forces (F_1 - F_n) of ~~the~~ piston-cylinder units (11) for the strand support roll segments (9) or of the drive support rolls (7c) or of ~~the~~ piston-cylinder units (11) of the drive support rolls (7c) are increased until a ~~the~~ required driving torque is transmitted.

12. (Currently amended) Device for driving drive support rolls (7c) of a continuous casting machine for liquid metals, ~~especially liquid steel materials,~~ comprising a strand guide (7) for the continuously cast strand (1), which strand guide (7)

comprises ~~consists of~~ electrically driven individual drive support rolls (7c) and/or hydraulically adjustable strand support roll segments (9), wherein an automatic load balance control system (12) for all ~~the~~ drives (10) is developed as a ~~the~~ sum of ~~the~~ individual forces for casting speed, motor torque, motor speed, and standard correction factors and is provided with individual adjustment of ~~the~~ torque and speed of each drive support roll motor (8), wherein the automatic load balance control system (12) has a computing unit (13) for determining a ~~the~~ torque distribution, whose input variables (14) include ~~consist~~ at least a ~~of the~~ number "n" of active drives (8, 11) and a ~~the~~ load capacity of the individual drive support rolls (7c), wherein processing values expressed by ~~the~~ plant-specific design of the strand guide (7) and ~~the~~ geometric data of the continuously cast strand (1) are input, and ~~that~~ information about a ~~the~~ state of wear of the drive support rolls (7c) and ~~the~~ current contact forces F_{1-n} and ~~the~~ current driving torques $M_{actual, 1-n}$ are used as input variables (14).

13. (Previously presented) Device in accordance with claim 12, wherein a set point $M_{set, 1-n}$ is determined in the computing unit (13) from the input variables (14) and introduced into each torque controller (15) as an input variable (16).

14. (Currently amended) Device in accordance with claim 13 ~~12~~, wherein each torque controller (15) is connected to a speed controller (17), to which a correction speed (18) for an ~~the~~ electric motor (8) can be transmitted.